

FURY FOCUS

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AFGHAN NATIONAL
SECURITY FORCES:
'TAKING THE LEAD IN KHOWST'



from the sky

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On the cover



An Afghan National Army soldier holds his rocket propelled grenade launcher while riding in the back of his truck during a patrol through Sabari, Afghanistan, Sept. 29, 2007. (Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/Task Force Fury PAO)

Task Force Fury Commander
Col. Martin P. Schweitzer

Task Force Fury Cmd Sgt. Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Flowers

Task Force Fury PAO
Maj. Christine Nelson-Chung

Task Force Fury PA NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Daniel W. Bailey

Task Force Fury Journalists
Spc. Matthew Leary
Spc. Micah E. Clare

22nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.
Sgt. 1st Class Robert Couture

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Submissions or comments may be submitted to

daniel.bailey@afghan.swa.army.mil.

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Fury 6: We're Still Making Progress

For our families back home and our Troopers here in Afghanistan, it's apparent that fall has arrived and winter is not far behind. Most of us are busy preparing for a change to the daily routine and weather. Our children are back in school and folks are shopping for winter clothes while our Paratroopers in Afghanistan are making preparations as well.

Winter may slow down the enemy, but it never slows down our hard-charging Paratroopers who are still helping secure and develop Afghanistan over these next months. We are doing everything possible to ensure our units continue to have the gear, supplies, equipment and capabilities to maneuver in the cold weather.

This month, we pause to recognize two great Paratroopers as we reflect on the tragic sacrifices made by our team. Sgt. Zachary D. Tellier was a squad leader with Troop C, 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment who was mortally wounded when his unit came under attack. Tellier was only in the Army for two short years, but already recognized by his leadership as a "leader-in-the-making" who cared deeply about those with whom he was working. Spc. Matthew D. Taylor was a dedicated member of our sister unit Task Force Eagle, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment. He was an



Fury 6
COL Martin Schweitzer

M2 .50 cal gunner who had the motivation and enthusiasm to take on any task and possessed the ability to excel.

I ask that you honor their memory and continue the effort they supported so bravely.

We saw the coalition team's hard work leading up to and during Operation Kyber. This was another great success for the Afghan National Security Forces and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as well. These combined and joint operations with Afghans in the lead are a huge step which empowers them to regain what the Taliban and other criminals took away. Together we are making Afghanistan a safer country.

We always keep our families at Bragg and around the world in our thoughts. You make it possible for us to focus on the mission and keep our Troopers safe. We count on you for a lot and sometimes things can get tough. Remember that there are Family Readiness Groups and agencies at Ft. Bragg and across the Army to lend a hand. If you don't know where to go, contact our Rear Detachment. As always, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for what you selflessly do every day!

All the Way! Fury from the Sky!

Col. Schweitzer

Fury 7: Troopers Putting on The Miles

Greetings to all, time is moving right along and the weather here is getting a little chilly in the mountains! The Paratroopers of Task Force Fury are still putting the miles on their boots and vehicles, and will continue to do so until told otherwise.

Most of our folks have completed leave, and as they return, they share the stories of homecomings and the kindness from those back home.

Many here have become designated photographers for their platoons and companies, and I enjoy seeing the pictures!

I was in Jalabaad visiting the 1-508th and although they move around a lot, they seem to bring a bit of home wherever they go, and the chow at some of their camp sites is outstanding.

I would also like to share with you the number of Paratroopers that are being promoted out here is incredible! During these 15 months we're seeing some SPC's make SSG, and it continues as the time passes. Our young folks are stepping



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CSM Richard Flowers

up to whatever challenge they confront in this country.

Please remember to mail Christmas gifts and other packages early to your troopers so they don't get caught up in the holiday madness!

And as a reminder, we've started the "winterization" here in Afghanistan to ensure we won't have many issues. The leaders are doing everything possible to ensure your troopers are ready!

With that said I hope all of you are doing the same and getting your families ready as we know you are. You also still have time to start a savings plan so when your loved one gets home, you can go on a great vacation to some nice place.

God bless you all and take care!

All the way! Fury from the Sky!

Command Sgt. Maj. Flowers

Lets Put a Leash on Leishmaniasis

Hans Balke

Task Force Fury Safety

Oh, come here you cute, fuzzy, wuzzy, little puppy. Wait, what am I doing? I don't know where you have been and if you're carrying any diseases! I heard that four service members contracted Leishmaniasis/Mange from local animals. I'd better do some research before I adopt you.

Well, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC):

Leishmaniasis is a parasitic disease spread by the bite of infected sand flies. There are several different forms of leishmaniasis.

The most common forms are cutaneous leishmaniasis, which causes skin sores, and visceral leishmaniasis, which affects some of the internal organs of the body (for example, spleen, liver, bone marrow).

And as I read on: People who have cutaneous leishmaniasis have one or more sores on their skin. The sores can change in size and appearance over time. They often end up looking somewhat like a volcano, with a raised edge and central crater. Some sores are covered by a scab. The sores can be painless or painful. Some people have swollen glands near the sores (for example, under the arm if the sores are on the arm or hand).

People who have visceral leishmaniasis usually have fever, weight loss, and an enlarged spleen and liver (usually the spleen is bigger than the liver). Some patients have swollen glands. Certain blood tests are abnormal.

For example, patients usually have low blood counts, including a low red blood cell count (anemia), low white blood cell count, and low platelet count.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO): The disease can produce a large number of lesions - sometimes up to 200 - causing serious disability and invariably leaving the patient permanently scarred, a stigma which can cause serious social prejudice.

Yeah, I bet...I've seen the pictures.

Hmm, sores looking liking craters? This is getting interesting.

Well, now I know what the forms are but is it really present here in Afghanistan? Time to dig deeper.

According to the WHO of the approximately 200,000 cases of leishmaniasis in Afghanistan, about 65,000 are in the Kabul area. Depending on what documentation you read the incidence rate varies between 2 and 8 percent.

Yes, it's around here in Afghanistan.

How can I protect myself from these biting insects?

Well, for one leave all the local animals alone. We, Americans are a pet loving society but this is the wrong place to adopt an animal, no matter how cute or cuddly. Also according to the CDC experts:

- Avoid outdoor activities, especially from dusk to dawn, when sand flies are the most active.

- When outside, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks. Good thing the Army issued me all this gear already. Being outside in flip-flops, shorts and tank shirt is a good way to attract these buggers.

- Use fine mesh netting and treat the netting with permethrin.

But the most important prevention method is to use a liberal application of 30-35% DEET on exposed skin and uniform open-



ings and to spray clothing with permethrin-containing insecticides. Just make sure to let the permethrin dry before putting the clothing back on.

I think the puppy will have to fend for itself. Besides, I really do not want to violate a direct order from the TF Fury commander to not have pets.

Oh, and if the thought of festering crater-like sores on your body or a violation of an order by the TF Fury Commander are not enough reasons for you to leave the animals alone, there is always the threat of rabies to consider.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations "Rabies is a fatal disease in humans and warm-blooded animals. It is endemic in Afghanistan and has been for many years. Dogs transmit the disease through biting."

However, any mammal can get rabies; including cats, bats, foxes, and coyotes. People usually get rabies from the bite of a rabid animal, but a scratch from an infected animal can transmit the rabies virus; a bite is not necessarily required. Scratches and abrasions from a rabid animal constitute non-bite exposures.

The threat of a frothing, crazed animal is usually enough to keep people away, but an animal does not have to show the typical rabies symptoms to be infected. A friendly-looking animal can carry the disease and spread it to humans with one bad bite.

If not immediately reported and treated, the rabies incubation period in humans can last from 10 days to a year before any symptoms manifest. It's vitally important to immediately wash the wound or scratch with soap and water and seek medical help.

The first symptoms of rabies may be nonspecific flu-like signs — malaise, fever, or headache, which may last for days.

There may be discomfort or slight pain at the site of exposure (bite), progressing within days to symptoms of cerebral dysfunction, anxiety, confusion, agitation, progressing to delirium, abnormal behavior, hallucinations, and insomnia.

Avoid all this worry and wait till we return State-side before adopting any pets. It's the safe, legal and smart thing to do.

Sergeant Major of the Army Visits Khost PRT

Sgt. Matthew Clifton

22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE CHAPMAN, Afghanistan – The Soldiers and Sailors of the Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team were given a chance to speak with the Sergeant Major of the Army, Kenneth O. Preston, when he visited their FOB for an awards ceremony and promotion Sept. 16th.

Four Soldiers were presented Army Commendation Medals by Preston and one was also promoted to the rank of staff sergeant by the highest ranking enlisted Soldier in the Army.

“I think it’s good the [sergeant major] takes the time to come to places like this and give our Soldiers credit,” said 1st Sgt. Dino Kosio, the first sergeant for the Khowst PRT. “Even though it’s usually just a quick

visit, it lets our guys know he cares about what they are doing over here.”

Sgt. Frederick Adams and Staff Sgts. Thomas Boyd, Kirtis Hoursch and Geofrey Hunt, all squad leaders and infantrymen with the 158th Infantry Battalion, Ariz. National Guard, attached to the Khowst PRT, were presented Army Commendation Medals. Adams was also promoted to the rank of staff sergeant by Preston.

After handing out the medals, Preston took time to address all of the Soldiers and Sailors of the PRT and talked in depth about what it means to serve your country.

“First of all, I want to thank the leadership for allowing me to come out here today,” Preston started. “It’s always good to be able to come out and present awards, as well as talk about issues you guys might be having.”

Preston asked everyone in the room who has had a parent serve in the military

to raise their hand.

There was hardly a lowered hand in sight.

“This proves what I have known all along, the military has family ties,” Preston said. “Unfortunately, there are hundreds of thousands of Americans who have no idea what the military really is.”

Mentioning this, he asked a favor of the Soldiers and Sailors of the Khowst PRT.

“When you go home on [leave] or for the end of your deployment, I want you to help tell the Servicemember’s story,” he said. “We actually encourage our guys to travel in their uniforms now, so when they sit next to a civilian on a plane, they can tell them what being a Soldier or a Sailor is all about.” In closing, Preston reiterated how proud he is of all the service members of the PRT and said the American people are proud and have the Soldiers and Sailors in their thoughts and prayers.



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Clifton/ 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, (left), poses after presenting an Army Commendation Medal to Staff Sgt. Kirtis Hoursch, a squad leader from the 158th Infantry Battalion, Arizona National Guard, attached to the Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team, Sept. 16, at Forward Operating Base Chapman, Afghanistan.

ETT leading ANSF to Solidarity



Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/Task Force Fury PAO

At dawn, Afghan National Police prepare to patrol through a village in Sabari District, Khost Province, Afghanistan September 29, 2007.

Spc. Nathan Hutchinson

22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Although the brunt of American and Coalition forces are used to assisting Afghan Forces during many operations, the Afghan National Security Forces still require mentorship to help solidify the respect and acceptance of the Afghan people.

Embedded Tactical Trainers are Soldiers whose primary goals are training and coaching Afghan National Army and Police in-and-out of operations.

"Our biggest job is showing ANSF what right looks like," said Army Maj. Chris P. Guziec, district commander for the ANP ETT.

"We take what they think is right and mold it into something that is workable," said Guziec, an Army National Guard Soldier from Buffalo, N.Y. "This helps them better understand the steps to take and the reason for the changes."

Guziec said this type of training requires flexibility for both groups, along with consideration for Afghanistan's cultural and religious foundation.

"We are the ANP's mentors; making sure they are being professional at their jobs and not exploiting their power," said Army Cpt. Jason E. Knueven, district team chief for the ANP ETT.

Knueven, a National Guard Soldier from Lemars, Iowa, said he

notices positive changes in each of the missions he oversees.

The most recent mission involved the ANA and ANP securing several villages and searching houses based on intelligence gathered by coalition forces and ANSF.

"They were being professional at their job," Knueven said. "They weren't going in and stirring up the houses. The people took it really well because the ANSF were doing it the right way."

Even those working with the ANSF in operations and exercises see improvement in their proficiency.

"It's a slow process and a gradual process, but I definitely see an improvement in the way they plan and execute missions and control their forces," said 1st Lt. Brian M. Kitching, 2nd Platoon Leader, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

"The local populace needs to be able to build that trust with its own military and police," said Kitching. "ANA and ANP working to catch the bad guys will do that."

Kitching said the ANSF has to do more than catch bad guys to earn the trust and respect of the Afghan people. Civilians need to know they can rely on their military and police to protect them.

"The good people want the bad people out too, but they have to trust the people searching their homes," said Knueven.

"Our presence helps ensure their guys are not tempted to do anything other than act professionally."

1st Bn., 508th PIR Makes Presence Known while at Oasis in Pachir Wa Agam District

Sgt. Brandon Aird
173rd ABCT PAO

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Paratroopers from 1st Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team 82nd Airborne Division, are helping bring security to the Pachir Wa Agam District in southeast Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan.

The district is a flourishing oasis created by farmers using a small river to irrigate the surrounding land. Fields of corn, cotton, wheat and other crops extend as far as the water can flow.

The farmers have endured heavy conflict for the last 30 years. The district was a stronghold for the mujahedeen during the Soviet War and was heavily bombed during the initial phases of Operation Enduring Freedom. The area was also one of the last strong holds in Afghanistan for al-Qaida and Taliban.

1st Platoon patrols the district for three to seven days at a time, said Spc. Chad Andrews, a 19-year-old mortar man from Colombia, S.C.

Their time in the district is spent working closely with Afghan National Police and village elders.

1st Platoon handles security while the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team and local leaders like Milik Khangul work with the government to improve economic development in the area.

Khangul visited the paratroopers. while they were camped for the night Sept. 7. They had just finished patrolling the roads for improvised explosive devices.

Khangul, along with a few village elders, walked up to the perimeter to talk about construction, mines and extremists. He is working to build four bridges in the district to help locals traverse a small river.

Army Capt. Don Canterna, Company B's commander, talked with Khangul and village elders until dusk.

The village elder's main concern is land mines from the Soviet War that continue to plague the area. Rival farmers are digging up old land mines to replant in rival fields in an attempt to kill off the competition.

"Except they're hurting more kids than farmers," explained a village elder.

Canterna told the group that Bravo Co. would remove and destroy any land mines in the area.

"All you have to do is tell us where they are," Canterna said.

The next few days while 1st Plt. patrolled the roads, loud explosions could be heard, the result of an explosive ordnance disposal team using controlled detonations to destroy turned in explosives.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Aird/173rd ABCT PAO

Paratroopers from 1st Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, secure a school during a patrol through a village in Pachir Wa Agam District in southeast Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, Sept. 7, 2007.

Headquarters Unit Takes

Spc. Micah E. Clare
4th BCT PAO

SABARI, Afghanistan - Some people may think that Soldiers assigned to headquarters units aren't used to leaving the confines of a tactical operations center, much less living outside the wire.

However, one such headquarters unit would beg to differ.

To the Paratroopers of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery (HHB), 2nd Battalion, 321st Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 82nd Airborne Division, being fatigued and dirty from spending weeks out on patrols, going without hot meals, showers or a comfortable bed to sleep in at night is nothing new.

Stationed at the Bak District Center in Khowst province, Afghanistan, almost an hour from any major forward operating base, the maneuver platoon of HHB has performed a job well beyond what was ever laid out for them on paper, said Army Staff Sgt. Jesse English, an HHB section chief from Moloka'i, Hawaii.

"An HHB maneuver platoon doesn't even exist on any official documents anywhere," said English, whose actual military occupational specialty lies in weather forecasting. "I've got to be the only 'weather guy' section chief in 82nd history."

The rest of the platoon is also made up of a wide range of battalion support personnel that were pulled from various positions throughout HHB. Personnel from communications, weather, supply, nuclear bio-



Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/Task Force Fury PAO
Army Staff Sgt. Jesse English, a section chief in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, watches as vehicles pass a tactical control checkpoint set up by the Afghan National Police in Sabari District, Khost Province, Afghanistan September 29, 2007. English is a native of Moloka'i, Hawaii.

logical chemical, fire direction control and even cooks are all now part of the maneuver team, explained English.

For this reason, the members of the platoon jokingly refer to themselves as "The Misfits," he said.

The team had to quickly adapt to its new mission of providing a permanent presence in Khowst provincial districts of Sabari and Bak, said Army Sgt. 1st Class Luis Rivera, a geologic surveyor turned HHB platoon sergeant from Puerto Rico.

"Most of these guys have had to learn their new jobs from scratch," Rivera said.

Despite the fact that most members of the team have had no special combat training, many of them were able to contribute valuable combat leadership experience, Rivera explained, who himself helped train Iraqi army soldiers in his previous Iraq deployment.

"We pooled what we had together to forge this team," he said.

Since its arrival to Afghanistan in February, the HHB maneuver platoon has executed over 200 missions, to include routine mounted and dismounted patrols, humanitarian-aid deliveries, VIP escorts and protecting the Bak and Sabari District centers, Rivera explained.

"Whatever mission is required in this area of operation, we're the ones who get it done," said Rivera.

Being responsible for such a high volume of missions can be quite difficult, he said.

"In the beginning, it seemed overwhelming because we had to do an incredible amount of different missions," Rivera said. "In time...the guys began to understand that everything was for a reason."

His Soldiers agree that it was a challenge.

"It took a while to get into the groove," said Spc. Christopher Gilbert, an unmanned aerial vehicle operator from Lenoir, N.C.

When he was assigned to HHB last year, he definitely didn't picture himself out in the field patrolling around in Humvees, teaching local policemen how to run tactical check points, or pulling security at a district center.

Mission Outside the Wire

Doing these things on a daily basis was all the training they needed though, he said.

"Like everyone else, I got some basic training for these things before I came, but I definitely didn't know as much about these jobs as I do now," Gilbert explained.

He remembered how rough the platoon's first few weeks at the district center in Bak were.

"We lived out of our trucks for weeks on end," he said. "Then we upgraded to a tent. We pretty much ate (meals ready to eat) for five months straight out here."

Since then, a building was constructed for the units stationed at the Bak District Center, where they are able to cook hot meals and have access to Internet and phones.

But the mission has not changed and is even more effective now that the maneuver platoon has an established home in the area, said Army Capt. Peter Cairns, HHB's commander, from Silver Springs, Md.

"You need to be out there living with the locals as much as possible," he said. "If not, you'll never have a really good feel for the area you're living in."

Having this permanent presence in Khowst was the main reason why 2-321st tasked HHB and the battalion maintenance company, Company G, based in a nearby district, to create maneuver platoons.

"The previous artillery battalion had no maneuver mission (in Khowst)," Cairns explained. "We decided that a permanent presence was needed to wage a better counterinsurgency fight in this area."

It has definitely worked to their advantage, he said.



Paratroopers from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Bn., 321st Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, watch as Afghan National Security Forces search people passing through a tactical checkpoint in Sabari District, Khost Province, Afghanistan September 29, 2007.

"We've developed such good relationships with the people of Sabari, from the sub-governor to police chiefs to shop-keepers," Cairns said. "I know the roads in Sabari and Bak better than the ones at home. I know the faces of shopkeepers and village people better than in Fayetteville (N.C.)."

The people of Sabari and Bak have been plagued with Taliban intimidation and improvised explosive device manufacturing cells, making the two districts historically the most dangerous in Khowst. However, by showing a constant presence and reinforcing and mentoring the local Afghan national police, these areas are now becoming safer, he said.

"When you get to know an area this well, you're able to tell when things aren't right," he said.

The Paratroopers stationed here know that this presence is not just beneficial to this area, but essential.

"Only by being out here all the time, have we been able to get the locals to understand that we're here to help," said Gilbert. "Sometimes it's just a lot of smiling and waving, but it gets the message across: if they just put a little trust in us, together we'll get the bad guys out of here and we'll be done here."

When HHB finally does go home next year, their maneuver mission will be over, but the experience will be invaluable to their future Army careers, said English.

"They've done so well," he said. "When we get home, they'll no longer be just 'support guys,' they'll be a combat asset to any unit they are in."

Contaminated Water: Enter Red Devils and PRT

Sgt. Brandon Aird
173rd ABCT PAO

NANGRAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Paratroopers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company B, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, also known as the 'Red Devils', joined together with the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team to host a medical civil action program at a school in south-east Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan Sept. 9.

The village, Pachir Wa Agam, was shaped by Pashtun farmers out of a barren region south of Jalalabad.

Medics treated Afghans for skin infections, worms, diarrhea, flu, tuberculosis, headaches and malnutrition, but over all, worms, were predominantly the ailment afflicting the Afghans.

A small river that flows through Pachir Wa Agam is used by the farmers and their families for everything: drinking, cooking, bathing, hygiene and even fun.

Unfortunately for the Afghans, the river is heavily contaminated with pathogenic bacteria, parasites and viruses.

Almost everyone who came in for the medcap had stomach pains and headaches.

"The stomach pains are caused by worms and the headaches come from malnutrition and dehydration," explained Capt. Debbie Dye, a physician's assistant with the Nangarhar PRT.

As far as the headaches go, vitamins and Motrin were given along with instructions to drink more water.

De-worming medicine was handed out in ample supply according to Senior Airman Gina Lauber, a Nangarhar PRT medic.

"Hopefully that will take care of the worm problem," she said.

Medics like Lauber and Sgt. James Freisberg can treat most of the medical problems that arise from the river. Over all, medical issues arise from the lack of personal hygiene and sanitation conditions.



Photos by Sgt. Brandon Aird/173rd ABCT PAO

Army Sgt. James Freisberg, a medic in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, listens to child's heart beat during a medical civil action program in Pachir Wa Agam, Afghanistan, Sept. 9.



Air Force Senior Airman Gina Lauber, a Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team medic, takes a woman's blood pressure reading during a medical civil action program in Pachir Wa Agam, Afghanistan Sept. 9.

New Vehicle Muscling up MPs in Sabari, Bak

Spc. Micah E. Clare

Task Force Fury PAO

SABARI, Afghanistan - Where does a six-ton vehicle go? Anywhere it wants to, so says one company of military police (MP) in Khowst province, Afghanistan.

After receiving two M-1117 armored security vehicles (ASV) this summer, the MPs of 3rd Platoon, 546th Company, 385th MP Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, feel more than ready to fight a recent increase of improvised explosive device activity in the Sabari and Bak Districts.

"We feel like the safest convoy in the area of operations now," said Army Cpl. Josh Polley, a team leader in 3rd Platoon.

The vehicle, which saw entry into service in 1998, was designed for urban security operations, said Spc. Mike Rutledge, an ASV driver who attended a special course at Bagram Airfield for vehicle familiarization.

The ASVs are perfect for the types of missions the MPs execute in the two heavily populated districts, such as patrolling endless tight streets, transporting local government officials to meetings and escort missions, he explained.

"They are highly-maneuverable and have a better turning radius than Humvees," Rutledge said.

Even though their up-armored Humvees are already heavily armed, the ASV adds quite an extra punch. Sitting behind both a .50 caliber machine gun and a Mk-19 grenade launcher, the gunner has a clear view of the terrain from within the safe confines of a heavily armored turret, said Spc. Hailynn Talbot, an ASV gunner in 3rd Platoon.

"It's an empowering feeling," she said. "I know that if anything comes up, I have devastating firepower at my fingertips."

"It feels so much safer traveling with an ASV," he said. "These vehicles are definitely needed."

Seeing these behemoths providing security is something Afghans need as well and they feel well-protected, said Army Staff Sgt. Derrick Mullinex, a squad leader in 3rd Platoon.

"We hear a lot of Afghans and (Afghan national security forces) call it the 'tank with wheels,'" he said. "The sheer intimidation factor is quite powerful."

There really is only one thing left to be desired regarding the ASVs, Mullinex stated.

"We need more."



Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/ Task Force Fury PAO

An M-1117 Armored Security Vehicle from 3rd Platoon, 546th Company, 385th MP Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, fords a river crossing near the town of Yaqubi in Sabari District, Khost Province, Afghanistan, September 30, 2007.

Civil Affairs Team Helps Afghans Keep the Faith

Spc. Micah E. Clare

Task Force Fury PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BERMEL, Afghanistan — “Wake up! Prayer is better than sleep,” can be heard echoing hauntingly in Arabic throughout the valleys and hills to the people of Afghanistan as early as 4:00 a.m.

Broadcasted from village mosques, the melodic prayers beckoning people to worship 5 times a day are one of the most commonly heard sounds throughout the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Faithful prayer and service to Allah has been part of daily life for the majority of Afghans for centuries, said Army Capt. Peter McIntire, team leader for Civil Affairs Team A 14, 413th Civil Affairs Battalion from Tampa, Fla.

“Religion is one of the biggest factors in Afghan society,” he said. “It is entrenched in everything they do, there is nothing else,” he explained.

It is also a facet of their lives that the Taliban have been using against the reconstruction efforts of the International Security Assistance Forces.

“The Americans don’t respect your religion; they are anti-Islam,” is a fairly common message propagated by the Taliban, said McIntire.

Despite Taliban claims that the western forces in Afghanistan are enemies of Islam and the Afghan way of life, Army Civil Affairs teams in Bermel District, Paktika Province have been stepping in, by helping local villages rebuild and refurbish their mosques and religious schools.

It is part of the wide-spread Al-Queda information operations campaign trying to sway opinion against ISAF, he explained.

To show the rural communities in Bermel District ISAF’s genuine interest in their well being, McIntire and his team have been helping to provide new prayer rugs, paint and speaker towers for mosques and madrassas, the religious schools.

“Many of these smaller, more remote villages can’t afford these things,” McIntire said. “Manufactured items in Bermel are hard to come by, and we are always well received.”

The village elders of these towns are very thankful for these items.

“This is a very poor village, and all we have is a very simple mosque, with a speaker tower that’s been broken for months,” said Madaran-Han, an elder in the town of Sur-Zghamey. “It’s been sad having such a quiet village, with no calls for prayer. It is such a blessing to be given these things for our mosque.”

While the Taliban claim their insurgent activities are done in service to Allah, their actions speak louder than words, McIntire explained.

In April, the Taliban burned a delivery of mosque up-keep materials in the village of Harkolay, and act which outraged district council members at a recent shura, he said.

To fully stabilize and unify an area, relationships, alliances, and support from tribal leaders and shura members is needed, but a whole new avenue of cooperation opens up once we show support and respect to the Afghan’s Islamic faith, Arrizola said.

ISAF’s outreach to the host nation’s culture has paid big dividends, he said.

“Up until now, we really haven’t had much communication villages

like Sur Zghamey,” said Army Staff Sgt. Gabriel Arrizola, a team sergeant in CAT-A 14 from Lubbock, Texas. “But just by showing them we also care about their spiritual needs with these refurbishment kits, they took us on a tour of their whole village, including their mosque and homes. It was incredible how well they received us after just one visit.”

Even though Arrizola isn’t Muslim, he believes that encouraging the free practice of Afghan traditions is an integral step forward in the progress of freedom.

“Just because it’s a different religion than what I practice, helping the people here maintain and flourish in their way of life is what this war is all about,” Arrizola said. “I can put that ahead of any of my own personal beliefs.”

In a country that violently defeated invading armies who tried to force a foreign way of life, making Afghanistan a place where Muslims can continue living their lives just the way they want to is what the Civil Affairs team-members keep as a goal.

“This is exactly what we are trying to accomplish here,” Arrizola said. “Showing the people who really has their best interests at heart.”



Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/ Task Force Fury PAO

Army Sgt. Jay Rogers, a forward observer in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, Anvil Troop, 3rd Platoon, watches as prayer rugs are loaded on the back of his vehicle before a mission at Forward Operating Base Bermel in Paktika Province, Afghanistan July 19, 2007. 3rd Platoon was delivering a mosque refurbishment kit to an Afghan village in Bermel District.

Sister Services, Brothers in Arms

Sgt. Matthew Clifton

22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE CHAPMAN, Afghanistan – One only has to say two words to invoke a feeling of rivalry that is often present between two of the largest armed services in the United States Military.

“Army-Navy.”

Upon hearing those words, one’s mind is immediately drawn towards collegiate athletics, and although there may be some slight truth in the rivalry each Soldier or Sailor has towards the opposite service, one unit comprised not of Soldiers and Sailors, but Service-members, has demonstrated how the rivalry, when it comes down to it, is just good-hearted fun.

The truth is, whatever feuds the Army and Navy may have, they are certainly taken with a giant grain of salt.

No one unit better proves this point than the Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Made up of uniformed personnel from both services, the Khowst PRT plays a key role in the development of the Khowst province by funding and contracting projects like the building of schools, roads and hospitals.

This mission is a huge task and one that would not be possible without the complete and total teamwork of all its members, Army and Navy.

“This is the first time I’ve ever been in a joint environment,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Jeffrey Caffey, master at arms, Khowst PRT. “I’ve never experienced the ‘Army thing’ before and at first it was a total culture-shock.”

The “culture-shock” was best remembered through his pre-deployment training at Fort Bragg, N.C.

“I think the biggest thing for the Navy guys was the ruck-marches we went on,” said Staff Sgt. Michael A. Sheets, civil affairs noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Khowst PRT. “I think it was difficult for the [Navy] guys, not because they couldn’t handle it, but because they were so used to being on a ship.”

“It was fun teaching the guys about marching formations, which way to point their weapon and things like that,” Sheets continued. “They were completely cooperative the whole time and I don’t think I’ve ever seen any one group of guys more eager and willing to learn.”

Caffey, a New Braunfels, Texas native, laughed at the recollection of the ruck-marches, mentioning that, although he “walked” a lot during his Navy basic training, he had never before donned full “battle-rattle” and walked for miles in a formation.

“It was definitely different,” Caffey added. “Some of our guys had a tough time, but I think some of the Army guys also had to get used to having a Navy commander.”

None of the Soldiers in the unit had ever worked on a ship and both Caffey and Sheets agreed the Navy “slang” used by the commander was something the Soldiers had to get used to.

“There is an enormous amount of service-specific slang the commander uses in his speeches,” Sheets said jokingly. “He always says something about ‘fair winds.’”

Caffey was quick to add “fair winds” means everything is going



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Clifton/22nd MPAD

Army Staff Sgt. Kirtis Hourseh, a squad leader with the 158th Infantry Battalion, Arizona Army National Guard, attached to the Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team, inspects a Soldier and a Sailor prior to heading out on a mission Sept. 14, at Forward Operating Base Chapman, Afghanistan.

fine, like “smooth sailing.”

“The Army just says ‘hooah’ for everything,” Sheets, an Ohio native, retorted.

All-in-all, the unit spent three months training at Fort Bragg and after being in the Army for more than four years, this was Sheet’s first experience with the Navy.

“The tact shown by these guys during training can not be matched,” Sheets said. “Our commander is one of the smartest guys I know.”

Sheets referred to the way their commander, understanding he needed experienced leaders, made Sheets and other combat veterans “team leaders” during their training time.

Before they realized it, their training had stopped and they were in Afghanistan doing exactly what they had trained for. By that time, there was no longer the distinction between the Army and the Navy. They were just “the team.”

Daily life for Caffey and Sheets is productive. Working at the district center in Tani, a small district in Khowst, they live among the people of Afghanistan, helping to rebuild the area through funding and reconstruction projects.

“We work with the local government officials and police officers to ensure the continued stability of the district,” Caffey said. “They are an all-around good group and I feel proud that they are doing what’s best for their citizens.”

Straddling the half-way mark of their deployment, the lines of “Army and Navy” have gone from blurred to nonexistent.

“I don’t even see a difference anymore, its just one big team,” Caffey said.

Caffey nor Sheets bonded so well that it said something about how trivial and “elementary” any type of rivalry really is.

“I’m completely shocked at how everyone left their egos at the door and came together to be the best possible unit,” Sheets said. “Because we work so well as a team, I feel good about the future of what we’re doing here.”

Soldier Takes the Plunge Before Deployment

Spc. Nathan Hutchinson

22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Afghanistan

Deployment is something that affects a whole family, so why do so many people get married right before they go overseas? Commitment is nothing new to Soldiers, but marriage is a serious step for anyone.

For people who have already decided on marriage, taking the leap before deployment can be a wise choice financially, due to the benefits provided to Military families.

Army Spc. Barry K. Dalrymple, a driver for 3rd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, has been with his wife for almost five years, but got married just a few weeks before his deployment.

Dalrymple said he and his wife met in high school in Ashburn, Ga. in 2003.

"We went to prom together that year, and we've been together ever since," said Dalrymple.

Since meeting his wife, Dalrymple has joined the Army as an infantryman, completed airborne school and is now deployed to Afghanistan, where he has been since February.

"She wasn't excited about me joining the Army, but she said it was my decision," Dalrymple explained. "She said she would support me however she needed to."

Dalrymple and his wife, Amber, were engaged in August 2005, just a few months after he was stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C.

"He went home just about every chance he could," said Army Staff Sgt Joel M. Koppinger, 3rd Plt. noncommissioned officer in charge, Company D, 2nd Bn., 508th PIR. "It is a pretty long drive to Ashburn, but he tried to see his family and fiancée as much as possible."

Dalrymple wanted a solid financial start to his marriage and tying the knot before deployment was a monetarily sound decision.

"We were planning on getting married anyway," said Dalrymple. "A big reason I pushed getting married before deployment was because I could make more money."

"Since I'm getting out of the Army soon after redeployment, it would help us get a better footing for our future with a little more money."

This does not discount his love for his wife, but reveals a desire for a better future for his family.

"I hear a lot about newlyweds having financial problems in their first year or two," Dalrymple added. "We may still have that problem, but it won't as big of an issue because of the money I'm able to save up from deployment."

Dalrymple feels that leaving the Army and working on his education is the best choice for his future, but his leadership is not as enthusiastic about his decision.

"One side isn't right or wrong," said Army 1st Lt. Paul Lukehart, 3rd Platoon Leader, Company D, 2-508th PIR. "Dalrymple has decided that the Army doesn't fit his life or goals, so he's deciding to get out."



Photo by Spc. Nathan Hutchinson /22nd MPAD

Army Spc. Barry K. Dalrymple, a driver for 3rd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, stands next to his truck while it is being prepped for the next mission, Sept. 14, at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Afghanistan. Dalrymple has been deployed and married since February 2007.

"He works hard and has a good head on his shoulders, and the Army will miss him when he decides to leave."

When Dalrymple gets back home to Georgia, he plans on taking a vacation to the Bahamas with his wife, and start working on his degree in lumber management.

"He's matured in the Army; in professional knowledge and willingness to mentor younger Soldiers," said Lukehart. "His military experience will help with learning new skills, self management and coping with various situations to get the job done."

Dalrymple said there is much he enjoys and will miss about the Army, but doesn't want to burden his family with life as an infantry Soldier.

"I couldn't have asked for a better person to be with," said Dalrymple, speaking of his wife.

"She's supported me in every way, and I'm looking forward to spending my life with her," he added.

Soldiers! Act Now and See The World!

Spc. Micah E. Clare

Task Force Fury PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Army Lt. Mark Keri has always wanted to go to the Far East.

Even though currently deployed to Afghanistan, he's finally getting his chance.

Though most Soldiers leaving theater on block leave choose to return home to visit family and friends, many choose to travel abroad, and finally go on their dream vacation.

Keri, a psychological operations team leader from Bloomington, Minn., plans on going on vacation to Thailand, Cambodia, and possibly Laos during his leave instead of returning home.

"I've always wanted to go to these places," Keri said. "There is so much history there."

Keri, who has traveled much in his life, had other reasons why he decided not to return home next month.

"Minnesota is cold in November," he joked. "I will not put up with that while I'm on vacation. I want a place with beaches and monkeys."

Despite knowing he will always see home when he gets back, Keri pointed out that traveling is one of those things a person never looks back at with regret.

Even though single soldiers like Keri are a minority in today's deployed Army without families or children waiting for them at home, the opportunity for travel still can be enjoyed with loved ones.

Army Master Sgt. Tyler Kubesh, a Bloomington, Minn. native and the non-commissioned officer in charge of Keri's Psyop unit, took a trip to Europe on his second deployment to Bosnia in 2000 with his wife. They were able to visit France, Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia together by using a travel guidebook.

"It was called 'Rick Steve's Guide to Western Europe,'" Kubesh said. "It had restaurants, hotels, and travel prices, it was great. We just rolled up into a town, looked in the book, and found something in the town to go to. You just have to find the address, and get a taxi, train, or public transit system to take you there."

Knowing from experience, Kubesh recommends setting a budget for the trip before leaving, by planning roughly what the daily cost should be for hotels, travel, food, and extra for spending. For his trip with his wife, they set a budget for around \$5,000.

"We still spent a little more," he laughingly recalled. "It was the gifts we didn't know we were going to buy. \$5,000 sounds like a lot of money, but it is well worth it. You just have to save the money."

Kubesh and his wife will always look back at their vacation with fondness, because it was the first time either of them had traveled outside of the United States.

"It was her first time on an airplane," he said. "Definitely take

advantage of free travel. When else do you get a free roundtrip ticket to any country you want?"

The world can indeed be at the fingertips of any Soldier going on leave, since the round trip travel expense is in fact paid by the military.

However seeing the world on leave isn't quite as easy as flying home, and there are a few things that need to be taken care of before a Soldier can be checked off and cleared to travel.

"Soldiers going to any country other than the United States must be given a security threat briefing," said Army Master Sgt. Robert Haack, an intelligence non-commissioned-officer-in-charge in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

"Soldiers need to be aware that we have enemies everywhere," he explained. "Some places more than others. Americans are targets for terrorists, and people definitely notice you."

Off-limits and dangerously volatile countries are listed on the State Department's travel advisory posted on the internet, and can be found at www.travel.state.gov.

Besides countries like Cuba and Iran, war zones occupied by the United States are also definitely not allowed, Haack stated.

"We had a female once who wanted to go to Iraq to be with her husband on leave," he said. "That wasn't going to happen."

But other than a select few countries, one can travel just about anywhere in the world, Haack added.

So after deciding to experience any of these countries, the most important thing the traveler needs is a valid, up-to-date passport, and the nearest Human Resources Team is a one stop place to get it done.

To get a new passport, Soldiers need to bring in \$97, an original birth certificate or naturalization certificate, and their military identification card, said Army Spc. Chrease Roberts, a Human Resources specialist in the 4th BCT HRT.

A passport renewal only costs \$67 and the old passport, she added.

"We'll take your picture here and take care of everything else," Roberts said.

However, she warns Soldiers not to wait until the last minute to get this done.

"Do this well before hand," she said. "It could take from six to eight weeks to get this processed."

But after receiving the threat brief and presenting a valid passport to the country you want to visit, any Soldier can take advantage of a unique opportunity to travel anywhere they like.

Keri sees it this way.

"How often do you get almost a whole month off from work?" he asks. "I plan on making it memorable."



FURY FOTOS



Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/Task Force Fury PAO

An Afghan shopkeeper displays his wares when visited by members of Task Force Fury in Sabari, Afghanistan. Shops such as these carry a wide variety of cheap snacks, baked goods, and candy. Buyers beware of rotten fruit however!



Photo by

Spc. Micah E. Clare
/Task Force Fury PAO



Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/Task Force Fury PAO

At daybreak, two Afghan National Policemen brace themselves in the back of their truck for the bumpy ride across the rocky roads of Afghanistan's Sabari District during "Operation Two Minute Drill", where the Afghan National Security Forces better asserted themselves in Khowst Province's historically troublesome areas.



Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/Task Force Fury PAO

A Humvee from 3rd Platoon, 546th Company, 385th MP Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, fords a river crossing near the town of Yaqubi in Sabari District, Khost Province, Afghanistan, September 30, 2007.



Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/Task Force Fury PAO

Army Sgt. Chris Couvillion, a medic in Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 321st Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, administers an emergency intravenous shot to a dehydrated Afghan national police officer at the Bak District Center in Khowst province, Afghanistan, Sept. 28.



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Clifton/ 22nd MPAD

A landing zone is marked with smoke to guide the landing of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter carrying the Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, Sept. 16, at Forward Operating Base Chapman, Afghanistan. Preston visited FOB Chapman to present Army Commendation Medals to four Soldiers as well as talk to Soldiers about Army issues.

Lest we



Spc. Matthew Taylor
Company D, 1-503RD IN
Sept. 26, 2007

Spc. Matthew Taylor joined the US Army in April 2006, going through basic training and Airborne School at Ft Benning, Georgia. In October 2006, he arrived to Italy as his first duty station. He was assigned to Delta Company 1/503D, 1st Platoon.

He expressed his extreme interest in heavy weapon systems, and he was made a gunner.

Taylor enjoyed the outdoors and was very active. He also loved talking about his guitar and about a special guitar he wanted to purchase after he got back from Afghanistan. At first he was the quiet-type of person, trying to keep to himself, either listening to his music or playing games on his computer. However, one of the platoon brothers really got to know him and made him open up. Both of them were always hanging out together, there was never a moment that they were separated. He enjoyed his time in Italy, from hanging out with the guys at the barracks or traveling to different countries.

Taylor is survived by his mother, Patty Taylor and sister, Heather Taylor.



Sgt. Zachary D. Tellier
Troop C, 4/73rd Cav,
Sept. 29, 2007

Sgt. Zachary D. Tellier, a native of Charlotte N.C., joined the Army in September 2005 as infantryman. Upon completion of both One Station Unit Training and Airborne School at Ft. Benning, Ga., he was assigned to Troop C, 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

"He was a very experienced Soldier despite his short time in the Army," said Army Lt. Col. David Woods, commander of the 4-73rd Cav. "No matter what he did he focused on the job at hand because he deeply cared about what he was doing and who he was working with. In the end, he died fighting for his brothers."

Tellier's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with Valour Device, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart (with one Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the Parachutist Badge.

Tellier is survived by his wife Sarah, Mother, Father, and two brothers.

e forget



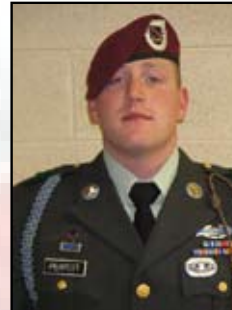
Spc. Agustin Gutierrez
Company B, 782nd BSB
June 9, 1987 - March 28, 2007



Pfc. Joseph G. Harris
Company C, 2/508th PIR
May 26, 1987 - May 3, 2007



Sgt. Alexander van Aalten
Company D, 1/508th PIR
Sept. 2, 1985 - April 20, 2007



Sgt. Dustin J. Perrott
Company A, 2/508th PIR
May 5, 1984 - June 21, 2007



Sgt. Charles E. Wyckoff
Company C, 1/508th PIR
Nov. 10, 1978 - June 6, 2007



Spc. Jeremy R. Greene
Company A, 2/87th IR
June 19, 1982 - April 28, 2007



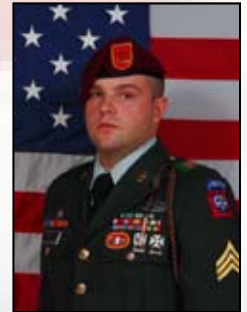
Sgt. David A. Stephens
Company B, 2/508th PIR
Nov. 9, 1978 - April 12, 2007



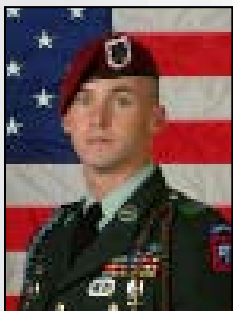
Pvt. Alan J. Austin
782nd BSB
Nov. 27, 1985 - Aug. 12, 2007



Maj. Larry J. Bauguess
HHC, 4th BSTB
Dec. 1, 1970 - May 14 2007



Sgt. Edmund W. McDonald
Company B, 782nd BSB
March 14, 1982 - March 28, 2007



Staff Sgt. Casey D. Combs
2/508th PIR
April 4, 1979 - April 12, 2007



Sgt. Johnson T. Travon
Company D, 1-503RD IN
23 July 2007



1st Sgt. Michael S. Curry, Jr.
Company D, 1-503RD IN
23 July 2007



Pfc. Adam J. Davis
Company D, 1-503RD IN
23 July 2007



Pvt. Jesse S. Rogers
Company D, 1-503RD IN
23 July 2007



Staff Sgt. Nicholas R. Carnes
Battery A, 2/138th FA
27 Aug. 2007



Sgt. Thomas P. McGee
546th MP Co.
5 July 2007



Pfc. Jordan E. Goode
Troop B, 4/73rd Cav.
Dec. 14, 1985 - Aug. 11, 2007

PICTURES FROM THE BATTLEFIELD

Pictures Taken by Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Flowers
Task Force Fury CSM



"Fury Fit" to Fight the Good Fight

"A Gratitude Attitude"

"That's not fair!" How many times have we heard that declaration? The plain truth is that, indeed, life can at times seem very arbitrary. Ours can be a hurting and painful world. We see that everyday here in Afghanistan. Life can have its share of difficulties, the evidence of that is obvious. Yet, there is also much for which we can be thankful. It depends on what we choose to look at and dwell on.

Under the best of circumstances we know that tragedy, disappointment, rejection and heartache can come at any moment. It can't be otherwise in our sin-marred world. However, there is one constant for which we can always be grateful: God loves us and cares about us. Yes, pain sometimes blurs our vision to see that. But, the truth of God's existence and love remains.

There are 3 attitudes we can possess, and even practice, that will help us consistently give thanks to God. You most likely already have these in some measure. "Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you."

1) *An attitude of humility.*

"This is really evidence of the great NCOs and Troopers I have worked with, who have molded me down through the years. Thank you."

How many times have you heard that at someone's promotion ceremony? This attitude says, "It's not about me." None of us is an island unto ourselves. God gives us to one another and gives others to us so that "iron sharpens iron." We have nothing that has not been given to us.

2) *An attitude of encouragement.*

After ten months of deployment Troopers downrange and families at home cannot maintain the hard job over the long haul without another to come along and say, "You're doing a great job!" A humble, confident leader is a source of never-ending encouragement.

3) *An attitude of generosity.*

You are already giving. Being deployed is being generous with yourself and with the skills and tools God has given you. "Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 6:38, NIV

A humble, encouraging, generous attitude produces a heart of thanksgiving not just in November but every other day of every year as well. I pray that you have a Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving as...

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy..."

Philippians 1:3-4, NIV

Praying for our peace...

Chaplain Larry Pundt
Task Force Fury

Please continue to keep in prayer the families of SGT McDonald, SPC Gutierrez, SSG Combs, SGT Stephens, SGT VanAalten, SGT Greene, PFC Harris, MAJ Bauguess, SGT Wyckoff, SGT Perrott, PFC Jordan E. Goode, SSG Nicholas R. Carnes, PVT Alan J. Austin, SGT Johnson T. Travon, 1SG Michael S. Curry, Jr., PFC Adam J. Davis, PVT Jesse S. Rogers, SGT Thomas P. McGee, SPC Taylor and SGT Tellier.

Equal Opportunity: Seeing is Believing...Or Is it?

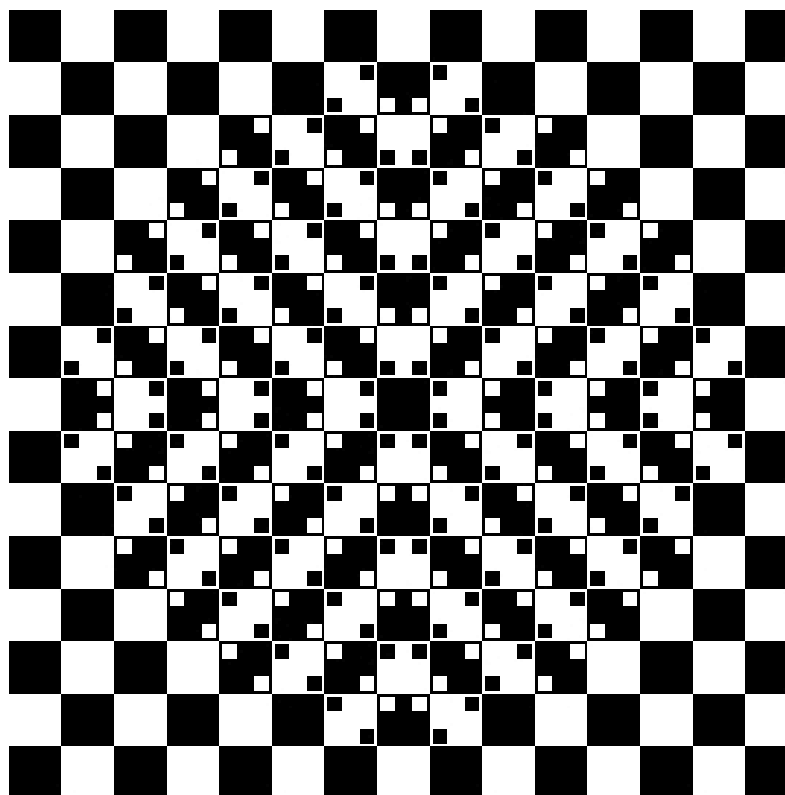
MSG Chris Balduf
CTF Fury EO Advisor

There is no escaping our perceptions, the procedure by which we try to gather and interpret information about our surroundings. Our capacity to comprehend new information is based on our socialization, the collective experiences of our past. Perceptions happen, and if they didn't life might be impossible. Imagine having to process each bit of information each time you experienced it, as if for the first time. "Is this safe?" "What does the red burner on the stove mean?" "Does this benefit me?" "Why is that guy with the explosive vest walking up to me? Does he want directions?" Our survival and ability to react quickly depends largely upon our perceptions.

However, our perceptions aren't always so helpful. Mental institutions are filled with people who see and hear things the rest of us do not. David Richard Berkowitz, the notorious Son of Sam, received instructions for his murderous deeds from a neighbor's dog.

Less dramatic, but still destructive, are the stereotypes (fixed, rigid ideas; usually associated with a group or category of people; they are not supported by evidence) we cling to as facts.

Everything you and I experience, learn, or think shapes the lens through which we view the world around us. Our perceptions



reinforce our socialization and also define our behaviors with others, and although we can't escape them, we do have the ability to question them, to test them, and by taking in new information about others and our selves, change them. We don't have to be swept along by perceptual shortcuts.

Giving in to first impressions or the halo effect (if we know something good about a person, we are likely to perceive him/her as having other good characteristics. But, if we know something unfavorable, we are likely to see other unfavorable things) can damage relationships, lead to destructive rumors, and the perpetuation of stereotypes.

According to author Dennis Kimbro, "One of the most important aspects of achievement is training the eyes to see properly. Sight is an interesting phenomenon. We see things not as they are, but as we are. Our perception is shaped by past experiences, according to faith and consciousness."

Not every encounter requires a life and death snap decision.

So before we pass judgment let's take a moment to look inside ourselves, ask questions of others, and be open to the possibility that what we perceive may not be the absolute truth.

Do you have something you would like to see published in the Fury Focus? Interesting story ideas, thought-provoking opinion/editorial pieces, or outstanding, good quality photos are welcome!

Please send submissions to daniel.bailey@afghan.swa.army.mil

While Afghan National Security Forces patrol through their town and visit with the adults, the children of a small village still play in the streets in Sabari District, Khowst Province, Afghanistan, Sept. 29, 2007. (Photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare/Task Force Fury PAO)

